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The Gough Map: Knowledge Clusters and the Map's Authorship

The medieval Gough Map of Great Britain is an exceptional cartographic artifact for the Middle Ages, not only for its size, but also in the way it methodically depicts the island as a unity. Research on the Gough Map has mostly concentrated on its dating, its geographical veracity and Plantagenet propaganda. However, the content and the internal logic of the Gough Map has not been analyzed systematically. As with many medieval maps, the makers of the Gough Map are unknown and it has survived without context, which only allows an investigation of the map through its content.

My project aims to examine the map according to different clusters of knowledge: not just Plantagenet propaganda, but also historiography and geographic knowledge, especially the "Matter of Britain". This body of medieval literature and historiography concerning the founding myth of Britain and its legendary Trojan origin was most famously influenced my Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regnum Britanniae* but was then taken up by several important authors. However, the British foundation myth, including stories of Brutus of Troy, King Arthur, and other figures such as Vortigern and Merlin, not only have an afterlife in literature, but were also used effectively as medieval propaganda for English rule. The Gough Map includes several references to the "Matter of Britain" and hence positions the foundation myth on the geographical reality of Britain, thus reaffirming its historic claim.

The project includes cross-referencing different kinds of sources to determine which ones were known by the makers of the map. This approach does not only uncover the various categories of knowledge that the compilers had to be privy to, but it can also attempt to recreate, *ad fontem*, an author function according to authorship theories by Michel Foucault and Wayne C. Booth. Thus, though it is not possible to "find" the real creator of the Gough Map through this analysis, a reconstruction of authorship becomes possible. Such a reconstruction of an author function – a method that originated in literary theory – has been hinted at in previous research of historical cartography, but it has not yet been applied in this field.

This project can therefore unveil the process of transmitting knowledge from different sources onto a map, as well as the decisions behind the inclusion and exclusion of certain information. Hence, it can reevaluate the notion of authorship in medieval cartography and contribute to the understanding of cartographical knowledge and how it was transmitted.

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